



Virginia's Transition Outcomes Project

Educated Employees - Virginia's Goal for Transition Services

Transition Outcomes Project Starts with Commitment!

- Schools must be willing to:
- Volunteer
- Improve post-school outcomes for students
- Formulate a team
- Establish partnerships
- Develop strategies for improvement
- Be able to implement change
- Participate in ongoing professional development
- Provide access to files
- Share what is learned
- Participate in a 3-4 hour Report Back meeting to set goals and develop strategies

Transition Outcomes Project Uses a Data-driven Model That

- Identifies and evaluates current practices used to meet transition requirements
- Includes baseline data from students' IEPs as the context for goal setting, strategy development, and implementing a local school improvement plan
- Promotes an IEP process driven by the student's post school goals
- Emphasizes
- Improving transition services,
- Increasing graduation rates,
- Showing results and
- Increasing the likelihood that student with disabilities will graduate and be employed
- Empowers local school divisions to make changes in systems, processes, forms, programs, and approaches

Conceptual Framework

[O'Leary, 1999]

Purpose

- Assist local school divisions in meeting IDEA's transition service requirements
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of providing and delivering transition services to students and families through the IEP process
 - Provide training and resource materials on the transition process for educators, administrators, adult agency personnel, parents and others
 - Improve graduation rates and post school outcomes of students with disabilities
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Advantages!

- Voluntary
 - Focused and manageable
 - Systemic change
 - Emphasis on program improvement not monitoring
 - Clear and concise
 - Training for local staff
 - Follow-along and Follow-up
 - Builds state capacity
 - Ongoing professional development
 - Uses periodic IEP reviews
 - Promotes form and process changes
 - Empowers decision-making and solutions from within!
 - Involves local school division personnel (general and special educators), VDOE personnel, adult service agency personnel, parents and students in the local improvement planning process
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What Others Learned!

- Benefits schools!
- Data show results
- Ongoing professional development
- New strategies for improving IEP meetings
- Clearer understanding of the transition requirements
- Better coordination of services
- Opportunities to network, problem solve and share success, resources and effective approaches with others
- Agencies receive lots of phone calls!
- Forms changed!
- Teachers excited and proud of their efforts!
- People network!
- Parents and students LIKE IEP meetings!
- Best practices grow from compliance!
- Creative solutions generated!

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Educated Employees - Virginia's Goal for Transition Services

Using the experiences of states already using the Transition Outcomes Project, Virginia developed a model and process for meeting IDEA's transition requirements identifying existent - and new - replicable and workable strategies to implement transition planning and services for students in secondary schools. Virginia's project assists local school divisions (a) to comply with the secondary transition service requirements of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*, (b) to increase graduation rates for students with disabilities, and (c) to achieve AYP for graduation rates in compliance with the *No Child Left Behind* legislation.

Why Is Virginia Focusing on Transition?

- To assist with corrective actions in transition at the local level
- To help teachers who struggle with understanding the requirements
- To fulfill Virginia's commitment to prepare students and families for the challenges of the adult world
- To increase opportunities for students with disabilities to graduate
- To provide opportunities for students to engage in meaningful educational experiences to prepare them for post-secondary education, employment and independent living
- To promote a student-led IEP process
- To improve outcomes for students with disabilities
- To achieve goals identified in Virginia's Continuous Improvement Monitoring Program

Plan and Rationale

The process begins with the gathering of baseline information from IEPs of students 14 years of age and older. The baseline information pinpoints specific problem areas for each of the transition services requirements. Following the gathering of baseline data, a team of individuals from the state, Regional Resource Center and the local district come together to discuss the findings from the reviews, set target goals and timelines as well as identify specific interventions and strategies designed to address each requirement problem area. District staff then begins to implement and put into place each of the strategies and interventions. On-going technical assistance is provided to staff approximately every 6 to 8 weeks to determine the success of the interventions and identify alternative strategies if needed. At the end of the time period (generally, one year) another review of the same IEP files is conducted with the results being compared to the initial baseline findings. Differences between the initial baseline data are noted to determine the changes and/or improvements. The specific interventions and strategies are also identified and recorded along with personal reactions and comments on the changes that have occurred from district staff.

(O'Leary, 1999)

Virginia's plan focuses on measurable results that are consistent with IDEA transition requirements and that will improve the graduation rates and post school outcomes of students with disabilities.

- Focus on transition requirements lays the foundation for “best practices”
- Implementation and success with strategies/interventions/solutions generalizes to other buildings and other local school divisions
- Focus on program improvement – not just federal monitoring - applying what is learned and actually works to stimulate larger systemic change across the state
- Plan derives from the successful experience of other states (e.g., Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Arizona, Montana, Maryland)
- Local school divisions volunteer to participate with "buy-in" from superintendents, special education directors and building level administrators
- Lasting change occurs in local schools when staff commit to the process and participate in responsible decision making

Sequence of Activities

Phase I – Identification and Commitment from Local School Divisions

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

- VDOE T/TAC and central office staffs provide an overview of the project's purpose and explain the sequence of activities to interested local school divisions.
- Local school divisions volunteer to participate after superintendents, special education directors and building level administrators "buy-in" recognizing that lasting change occurs in local schools when staff are committed and involved.
- VDOE T/TAC and central office staff obtain written commitment from local school division staff and local school administrators to participate in all phases of the project.
- In each participating local school division, one middle school and one high school agree to participate in the training, reviews, data collection, report out meeting, implementation, follow-along and final reviews.

EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS AND PROCEDURES

- First things first! – Focus is on transition requirements to lay the foundation for "best practices."
- VDOE staff selects an evaluation instrument, adapted to Virginia's specific needs, that determines the extent to which local school divisions are meeting transition requirements.
- Develop process and procedures for selecting the student sample
- Develop process and procedures for evaluating IEPs for the initial baseline

REVIEW TEAM TRAINING

- Identify local teams
- Use multiple external reviewers to provide consistency and objectivity
- Include those with various perspectives: general and special education teachers, administrators, related service providers, guidance counselors, and school psychologists
- Train teams to use the evaluation instrument and collect the requisite data

Phase II - Initial Data Collection from IEPs

TEAM VISITS

- With the assistance of the Regional T/TAC staff, the local Evaluation Team sets schedules, meets with district personnel, and completes reviews of IEPs of students, age 14 and older, on all transition requirements

ESTABLISH A BASELINE THROUGH IEP FILE REVIEWS

- The file review process itself is a terrific learning experience for everyone!
- Evaluation Team reviews IEPs of transition age students to determine problems or deficit areas with IDEA transition requirements

Phase III – Report-Out Meetings: Develop Strategies and Interventions for Local Improvement Plans

VDOE and T/TAC staff and evaluation team members meet with local school division building staff and other partners (DRS, Higher Ed., CSB, etc.)

- To set timelines
- To report findings
- To brainstorm strategies and interventions for improvement
- To identify and set building set target goals
- To set timelines for implementation, final reviews and schedules for follow-up visits
- VDOE and T/TAC staff provide technical assistance to building staff for implementing the local school improvement plan

Phase IV - Implementation and Follow-Along

- Local school divisions implement strategies, interventions, skills and knowledge gained from the Report-Out Meeting to address deficits and target improvement areas
- Follow-along and training by VDOE T/TAC personnel during the implementation stage to help local school divisions implement the strategies, interventions, skills, knowledge, and procedures decided on at the review meeting
- Local school divisions implement the strategies / interventions, skills and knowledge gained from the training to achieve target goals.

Phase V - Evaluation, Refinement, and Development of Next Steps

- Evaluation Team conducts follow-up reviews of IEPs to assess improvement and proximity in meeting target goals.
- Each local school division decides its timeline.

- Final Report-Out Meetings with Evaluation Teams and building staff to report final results and discuss next steps
- Review of overall results by VDOE personnel to develop "next steps" for expanded training, implementation, and replication

Our Appreciation!

Thanks to Martha Lehman for granting permission to use the materials developed for the Montana Transition Outcomes Project and to Dr. Ed O'Leary from the Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center for his advice and counsel and the wisdom to create this idea!